

Study skills are an important element in achieving success on your course.

The Study Skills Team,  
Cherie Cartwright & Helen Digman,  
provide one-to-one help with all aspects of study skills  
such as:

- Planning and structuring assignments
- Literature Reviews
- Developing academic writing
- Critical Analysis
- Referencing (One-to-ones/workshops)
- Academic Language

If you would like to discuss and develop your academic skills you can arrange to see a member of the study skills team for an appointment, or call in to see us in the HE Library or the Learning Curve.

We hope you enjoy your time studying with  
Barnsley College.

We look forward to seeing you!

Appointments are available during term time and term time holidays:

Monday	8.30am — 6pm
Tuesday	8.30am — 4.30pm
Wednesday	8.30am — 8pm
Thursday	8.30am — 4.30pm
Friday	8.30am — 12.30pm

# Academic essay writing template & Constructing paragraphs

## Academic essay writing template

**Introduction** – approximately 10% of word count

Introduce the topic of the essay and then state how you are going to approach it.

e.g. Introduce / establish background to the topic

Establish the reason for writing the essay (perhaps re-write the essay title, including the instruction words).

Outline how the essay will be answered:

- This essay will.....describe/analyse/discuss/evaluate etc.
- This essay aims firstly to examine....
- Secondly, important issues such as.....
- Finally.....will be discussed in order to establish....

**Useful link:** <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/introducing-work/>

## Useful phrases for paragraph points

### Transition Words and Phrases

Agreement / Addition / Similarity	in the first place	again	moreover
	not only ... but also	to	as well as
	as a matter of fact	and	together with
	in like manner	also	of course
	in addition	then	likewise
	coupled with	equally	comparatively
	in the same fashion / way	identically	correspondingly
	first, second, third	uniquely	similarly
	in the light of	like	furthermore
	not to mention	as	additionally
to say nothing of	too		
equally important			
by the same token			
Conclusion / Summary / Restatement	as can be seen	after all	overall
	generally speaking	in fact	ordinarily
	in the final analysis	in summary	usually
	all things considered	in conclusion	by and large
	as shown above	in short	to sum up
	in the long run	in brief	on the whole
	given these points	in essence	in any event
	as has been noted	to summarize	in either case
	in a word	on balance	all in all
	for the most part	altogether	

This information is taken from <https://www.smart-words.org/linking-words/transition-words.html>

## Academic essay writing template

**Main body** – 80% of word count divided into paragraphs for each of your main points

Main body of essay separated into paragraphs

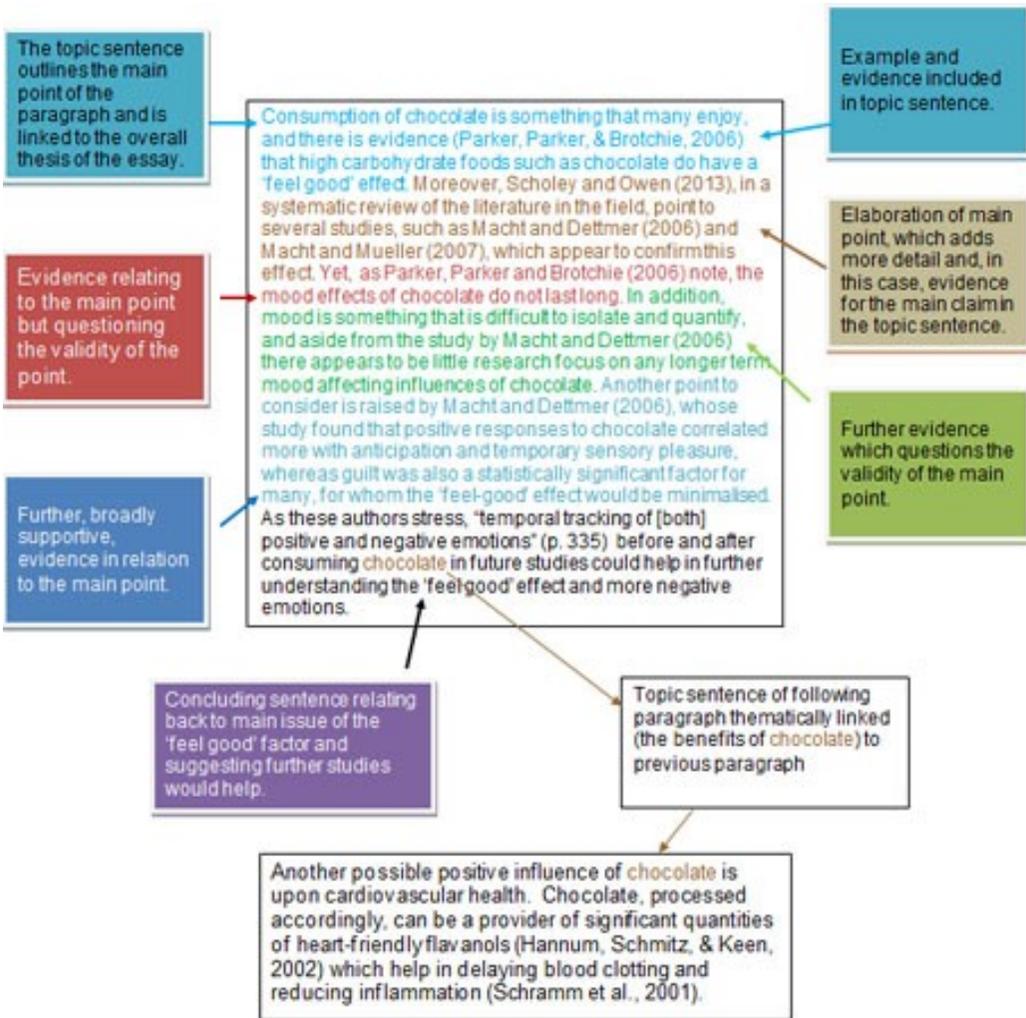
Each paragraph then needs to be structured:

- One key point per paragraph introduced in first sentence (Topic sentence)
- Key point then developed using evidence (references) – e.g. supporting or arguing against a claim
- Concluding sentence sums up the paragraph
- Paragraphs lead logically from one to another

**Top Tip:** See handouts on writing good paragraphs, available in HE Library

Useful link: <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/being-critical/>

<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/english-for-uni/essay-writing/>



# Academic essay writing template

**Writing your conclusion** - approximately 10% of word count

- Re-state the question  
e.g. This essay attempted to...  
This essay has discussed the .....  
The purpose of this essay was to.....  
This study set out to ...  
This paper has argued that ...  
This essay has discussed the reasons for ...
- Summarise the key points – no new material should be introduced
- Give final views

Useful link: <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/writing-conclusions/>

<b>DEFINE</b>	<p><b>Topic Sentence -</b> provide a simple definition of a concept</p> <p><b>Supporting Sentences –</b> provide more information through description, explanation, and examples; makes links between the concept and how it applies to a particular context or field</p> <p><b>Conclusion –</b> not necessary; can transition to the next paragraph if related to the concept</p>
<p><b>Useful transitional words and phrases</b> for example, for instance, an illustration of this, another example, firstly, the first step, secondly, the second step, finally, the final step</p>	

<b>DESCRIBE</b>	<p><b>Topic Sentence -</b> introduce the item to be described</p> <p><b>Supporting Sentences –</b> provide specific and detailed information about the item's characteristics and functions</p> <p><b>Conclusion –</b> not necessary; can transition to the next paragraph if related to the item described</p>
<p><b>Useful transitional words and phrases</b> In the foreground, in the middle distance, in the background, in the far distance, next to, near, up, down, between, beneath, above, below, on top of, beneath, left/right, centre, front, back, middle, in the interior, on the exterior, on the inside, on the outside, surrounding</p>	

<b>EXPLAIN</b>	<p><b>Topic Sentence -</b> introduce what will be explained</p> <p><b>Supporting Sentences –</b> explain each of the steps involved in the process, in the order that the steps are to be performed. Includes information about how something happens and why</p> <p><b>Conclusion –</b> provide a brief summary of the process</p>
<p><b>Useful transitional words and phrases</b> At first, initially, the first step, while, at the same time, the second/third/next step, after, next, finally, eventually, the final/last step.</p>	

<b>ILLUSTRATE</b>	<p><b>Topic Sentence -</b> state a general idea</p> <p><b>Supporting Sentences –</b> introduce examples to support the idea</p> <p><b>Conclusion –</b> make a link between the examples and the general idea</p>
<p><b>Useful transitional words and phrases</b> For example, for instance, an illustration of this, another example</p>	

# Write with purpose: what do you want your paragraph to do?

## Purpose Paragraph Breakdown

<b>ARGUE</b>	<p><b>Topic Sentence -</b> introduce the argument and position for or against</p> <p><b>Supporting Sentences –</b> develop the reasons for your position and presents facts and examples to support this; address any counter-arguments</p> <p><b>Conclusion –</b> restate position</p>
<p>A paragraph can be used to argue for or against a point of view. Each paragraph should focus on developing one main point for or against the position.</p>	
<p><b>Useful transitional words and phrases</b>  <b>For giving reasons:</b> first, second, third, another, next, last, finally, because, since, for  <b>For counter-argument:</b> but, however, of course, nevertheless, although, despite  <b>For concluding:</b> therefore, as a result, in conclusion, thus</p>	

<b>CLASSIFY</b>	<p><b>Topic Sentence -</b> Introduce the items being classified and/or the categories for classification</p> <p><b>Supporting Sentences –</b> provide more information about the items, and how their characteristics fit into a particular category</p> <p><b>Conclusion –</b> repeat what classification the item or category belongs to</p>
<p>This paragraph structure can be used to organise information, items, or ideas into categories. The organisation of information will depend on your purpose and subject area.</p>	
<p><b>Useful transitional words and phrases</b> Can be divided, can be classified, can be categorised the first/second/third</p>	

<b>COMPARE or CONTRAST</b>	<p><b>Topic Sentence -</b> introduce the items to be compared or contrasted, noting similarity or difference</p> <p><b>Supporting Sentences –</b> identify, describe, and discuss any similarities or differences</p> <p><b>Conclusion –</b> summarise and interpret the similarities and differences discussed</p>
<p>Use this paragraph structure if you need to examine similarities and differences. This paragraph structure is useful for literature reviews and reports.</p>	
<p><b>Useful transitional words and phrases</b>  <b>For comparison:</b> similar to, similarly, in the same way, like, equally, again, also, too  <b>For contrast:</b> in contrast, on the other hand, different from, whereas, while, unlike, but, although, however, conversely, yet, unlike</p>	

## Academic essay writing template

Referencing and Reference List – not included in word count

All the sources of information you have mentioned (referred to) must be briefly referenced in the correct format in your work (in text), and fully referenced in a **Reference List** at the end of your work.

Study Skills recommend identifying which referencing system you are using e.g. APA 6<sup>th</sup> or Harvard, printing it out in full and having it bound in the HE Library. It doesn't cost a lot and will help you throughout your course.

If you need help with referencing, workshops are available in the HE Library during the first academic term, or you can book an appointment with a **Study Skills advisor –**

[www.studyskills@barnsley.ac.uk](mailto:www.studyskills@barnsley.ac.uk) Tel: 01226 216 884

Remember – incorrect referencing could cost you valuable marks!

Useful link: <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/referring-to-sources/>

## Unity

A paragraph should discuss only one idea.

i.e. do not discuss advantages and disadvantages of a theory – split these parts of the argument into two separate paragraphs.

- The opening sentence of paragraph should outline the main idea (topic sentence).
- Every supporting sentence should directly explain, refer back to, or build on the main idea.
- Use the final sentence to refer back to the topic sentence and/

# CONSTRUCTING PARAGRAPHS

## Colour-coded paragraphs

Follow the structural paragraph format detailed on the opposite page to construct your paragraph.

Using highlighter pens of different colours, highlight each line of your paragraph to indicate **Topic sentence**, **Explanation/definition**, **Evidence** and **Comment**, **Concluding Sentence**.

Have you constructed a 'unity' paragraph?

Supporting statements

### The Topic sentence

States the main idea – a general statement

### Explanation or Definition (optional)

Clarifies any difficult or unclear terms in the Topic sentence  
*Alternatively:* introduces the evidence

### Evidence

Supports or develops the main idea with facts, examples, experiments, studies, arguments, quotes etc.

### Comment

- Explains what the evidence means, & how it relates to your point.
- Supports or develops the evidence with analysis or further info e.g. opposing or contrasting points to broaden or develop the discussion
- If appropriate, mention other evidence (examples/studies/experiments/interpretations) to widen the discussion

### Concluding sentence

- States the implications or consequences of the paragraph
- Shows the development of the argument
- Links back to the Topic sentence (may use same or similar key words from the Topic sentence)
- Links forwards to the main idea of the next paragraph